136
224

Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dō-ro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terīñ"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("nābber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurēza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "chera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

● 823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [774] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

241

very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.

deep plowing - "shärakkätä", in order to raise good soil.

final plowing - "zärrä", just before or after seeding.

134 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil, 823 so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "läm tyëff" and "tyëff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wändë märët") - any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.

female soil ("yëtë märët") - any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.

dark soil - "walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.

sandy soil - "mwaçhçhärä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.

mobile soil - "lel märët", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.

poorly draining soil - "rankwa märët", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.

eroded land - "borbor märët", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

134
823

alluvial soil - "borbwara mārēt", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.

infertile soils - "qoda mārēt" dries too quickly after rains;
"arbacha mārēt", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
"gebgaba mārēt", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
"gergera mārēt", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
"fech mārēt", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.

hard-to-penetrate - "gewchacha mārēt", plow cannot penetrate readily,
"gombore mārēt", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
"chancha mārēt" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalā zenāb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called

243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Geez, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "dabub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, [829] animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

X 794 T76 753

There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and causes epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous male "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

X 794 T76 823

The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In Abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farasey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjara" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

825

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

x 794
776
[823]

woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rïst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. ***Mot ged yallam*** ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be ***guabaz*** ("brave") and uses this term, like that of ***waṭādar*** ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāṣaw*	"Smash Him"
Ch̤aſcheſē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot."

After the liberation, as after the routing of Aḥmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting:

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababāl Yābbabāl genāl
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves.

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out-

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie):

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[50] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria.

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz.

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became highlands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; according to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind—it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

---

* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ǐnjarä* to the people."

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them.

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos, Sayṭān,* or *Agannent,* which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain.

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān,* rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām,* as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship.

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār. Zār* spirits are of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of ***zamad*** reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term ***wandam***, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term ***zamad*** itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term ***zamad*** as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of ***zamad*** derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of ***zamad*** is that of ***agar***, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's ***agar***, like those who comprise one's circle of ***zamad***, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of ***agar*** may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (***qolaññā***) and dwellers of higher regions (***dēgaññā***) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the ***qolaññā*** is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the ***dēgaññā*** is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

---

* The less prominent category of ***wagan*** is intermediate between these two. ***Wagan*** has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā* by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.

The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cultural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusionism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ǐnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*787
*783
539
[55]
[805]
*[192]
[823]
*787
539
*[192]

quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Lukows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totaled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

*756 *787 *793 from the debtera's perspective. Beginning with simple herbal remedies and ending with ganel pulling, the awakiy debtera's moral compromises are gradual and continuous. Although ganel pulling represents his only direct contact with demon helpers, his previous and continuing kifat performances make the debtera no stranger to the casuistry of ganel complicity. Beyond this, however, there is an important moral unity to the debtera's abinet works, whether they are produced by the power of divine beings or ganels. An abinet career is founded on a debtera's readiness to conceive of supernaturally derived power as a morally neutral commodity. As he exploits such power, he is constrained less by its intrinsic moral character than by its instrumental limitations. The debtera's accomplishment is to transmute the moral nature of the power he depends upon for his works. This he does by exerting his will over it, and directing it onto the objects and contingencies that he has selected.

*755 *793 778 792 * 823 *[192] Inviolability of Divine Power: The Atmakiy. The goodness (moges) of divine power is unblemished and its enjoyment is determined by divine will (yi'Igziyabiher yimoggin). The attitude of the pious man towards this will is supplicatory; towards this power, he is a passive recipient and a disinterested custodian. In a medical context, the atmakiy is exemplary. The atmakiy

("baptizer") is a priest or monk who provides sanctified healing waters for sickmen. By reading from appropriate liturgical texts, any literate ecclesiastic can sanctify ordinary water drawn from a river, or the water of a spring (tebel) known to have divine curing powers. Sanctified common water is generally dispensed in the courtyard of a church, by a resident cleric serving as atmakiy for the occasion. No atmakiy has exclusive rights to the tebel at which he works, since he is only the representative of the church or monastery in whose parish the tebel is located. An atmakiy provides no medical services beyond dispensing sanctified water or overseeing the tebel. According to the atmakiy, as the sickman bathes, the divine fires of the water repel the ganels responsible for his ailment. The layman, however, does not conceive the effectiveness of these waters so narrowly, but sees them as the medium for a divine grace (moges) unbounded by specific etiological notions. Consequently, although sanctified waters are used most commonly against madness (ibidet) and epilepsy (ganel yazow), both caused by ganels, they are also applied against serious, chronic ailments with which ganels are not generally associated (e.g., leprosy). Usually the sickman turns to sanctified waters as a last resort, after he has exhausted all other therapies he can afford. A sickman continues to bathe with the waters of a single church or tebel, until he has

*755 778 • 823 obtained a remission of his symptoms, or concedes that these particular waters are inadequate to his special needs. Tebel waters are much stronger than ordinary water, therapeutic failure with common water is generally followed with baths at a nearby tebel. Should the sickman likewise fail to obtain a cure here, often he journeys out to test the famous tebel springs about which he learns along the way. Some springs are known to be particularly effective against specific ailments, but, laymen are generally uncertain whether the effects of sanctified waters are cumulative or whether it is the divine grace of a single tebel that a sickman must seek.[39]

*756 *793 Manipulation of Divine Power: The Debtera. In contrast, the debtera's attitude towards divine power and divine will is largely manipulative, in spite of his supplicatory recitations. He works to abstract this power (through the mechanical application of verbal formulae, augmented by asmat), concentrate it (though the non-verbal elaborations of his abinet), and direct it (according to the demands of commerce and the indica-

[39]Occasionally, the sickman responds to a tebel with convulsive behavior, as the ganel afflicting him agonizes about.

734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
• [823] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to
[778] remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.